

Research Reports

Affective Style, Humor Styles and Happiness

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Abstract

The present study examined the relationships between dispositional approach and avoidance motives, humor styles, and happiness. In keeping with previous research, approach motives and the two positive humor styles (self-enhancing and affiliative) positively correlated with happiness, whereas avoidance motives and the two negative humor styles (self-defeating and aggressive) negatively correlated with happiness. Also, we found support for three new hypotheses. First, approach motives correlated positively with self-enhancing and affiliative humor styles. Second, avoidance motives correlated positively with self-defeating humor style, and third, the positive relationship between approach motives and happiness was mediated by self-enhancing humor style.

Keywords: affective style, humor styles, happiness, BIS/BAS, well-being

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I, not events, have the power to make me happy or unhappy today. I can choose which it shall be. Yesterday is dead, tomorrow hasn't arrived yet. I have just one day, today, and I'm going to be happy in it.

— Groucho Marx, *The Essential Groucho: Writings for by and about Groucho Marx*

Laugh whenever you can. Keeps you from killing yourself when things are bad. That and vodka.

— Jim Butcher, *Changes*

Happiness has been described as subjective well-being, that is, a person's judgment of life satisfaction and the balance of positive and negative affect experienced in day-to-day life (e.g., Lyubomirsky, 2001; Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999; Weiss, Bates, & Luciano, 2008). As seen in the first quote above, Groucho Marx understood that happiness is determined not only by our life circumstances but also by our dispositions or personalities. Some people seem to have "sunny" dispositions that enable them to find happiness even in the midst of adversity. They are the people who are very adept at "making lemonade when life hands them lemons." Others, by contrast, seem to have personalities that make happiness elusive no matter how great their fortune. Furthermore, Jim Butcher suggested in the second quote above that a key to finding happiness and avoiding misery is to keep a humorous outlook on life. Taken together, the folk wisdom of Groucho Marx and Jim Butcher raises the possibility that the fortunate people who have a sunny disposition use humor in a positive way in their daily lives as a strategy to find

happiness. Accordingly, the present research examined the relationship between affective style, a dispositional variable that refers to how we experience or regulate emotions in response to environmental cues (Davidson, 1998, 1992; Hofmann & Kashdan, 2010), and happiness. Further, we determined whether people who have a certain affective style are happy, in part, *because* of the way they use humor in their daily lives.

Affective Style

Theorists have proposed that two distinct self-regulatory motives underlie different affective styles, approach motives—motives to approach or seek appetitive stimuli or experiences, and avoidance motives—motives to avoid aversive stimuli or experiences (e.g., Carver, 1996; Davidson, 1998, 2000; Gray, 1970, 1981; Higgins, 1998). Gray (1981, 1982, 1990, 1994), for instance, conceptualized the approach and avoidance motives as two motivational/neurological systems: the Behavioral Activating System (BAS) and the Behavioral Inhibition System (BIS). The BAS regulates appetitive or approach motivation; it initiates potentially rewarding goal-directed behavior in response to an anticipated reward. The BIS regulates aversive or avoidance motivation; it inhibits goal directed behavior that might have aversive outcomes.

Furthermore, the BAS and BIS systems differentially predict the experience of positive and negative affect (Gray, 1990). Specifically, BAS sensitivity relates to the general experience of positive affect or happiness; whereas BIS sensitivity relates to the experience of negative affect (Carver & White, 1994; Gable, Reis, & Elliot, 2000; Heubeck, Wilkinson, & Cologon, 1998; Sutton & Davidson, 1997; Updegraff, Gable, & Taylor, 2004). Carver and White (1994), for instance, showed that participants scoring high on their BAS scale reported greater happiness upon the anticipation of a reward than those scoring low on the BAS scale (Exp. 4). Participants scoring higher on their BIS scale reported greater nervousness upon anticipation of a punishment than those scoring low on the BIS scale (Exp. 3).

In addition, Gable et al. (2000) found that participants reported greater positive affect in their daily lives insofar as they were high in BAS sensitivity, and greater negative daily affect insofar as they were high in BIS sensitivity. Similarly, Sutton and Davidson (1997) found that people who had a relatively high BAS to BIS ratio reported a higher level of positive dispositional affect. In contrast, people with a low BAS to BIS ratio reported a higher level of negative dispositional affect. Finally, Henriques and Davidson (1991) found that depression was associated with a weak or insensitive BAS.

Taken together, existing research suggests that a relatively sensitive BAS contributes to an affective style that enables people to be happy; a sensitive BIS contributes to an affective style that makes happiness harder to find. Furthermore, the BAS and BIS systems appear to relate to affective experience through different psychological and behavioral processes. Gable et al. (2000) found that participants high in BAS sensitivity experienced more positive affect in their daily lives because they strategically or actively pursued positive emotional experiences compared to those low in BAS. In contrast, people high in BIS did not actively seek out more negative events than those low in BIS. They experienced more negative affect in their daily lives because they were more strongly affected by the negative events they did experience (Gable, 2006; Updegraff et al., 2004).

Humor Styles

Humor style refers to a person's habitual way of using humor in daily life, that is, one's typical and stable pattern of humor behaviors and attitudes (Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir, 2003). Martin et al. (2003) described four humor styles, two that are positive or beneficial to the self or others, and two that are negative or detrimental

to the self or others. [Martin et al. \(2003\)](#) referred to the two positive humor styles as *affiliative* and *self-enhancing*, and the two negative humor styles as *self-defeating* and *aggressive*.

People who have an affiliative humor style essentially use humor to attain interpersonal or social rewards. That is, they amuse and entertain others in order to enhance the quality of social relationships (e.g., to increase interpersonal cohesiveness and attraction). Because the use of affiliative humor affirms both the self and others, it is associated with greater intimacy in interpersonal relationships ([Martin et al., 2003](#)) and greater conflict resolution in dating couples ([Campbell, Martin, & Ward, 2008](#)). People who have a self-enhancing humor style use humor to achieve intrapersonal rewards, that is, to enhance or maintain positive psychological well-being. They maintain a humorous outlook on life, coping with difficult circumstances by viewing them from a humorous perspective.

Those with an aggressive humor style use humor, not to make interpersonal relationships more rewarding for the self and others, but rather as a means of hurting or manipulating others. Individuals high in aggressive humor tease and ridicule others to demonstrate their superiority without concern for the impact such humorous belittlement might have on others ([Martin et al., 2003](#)). Not surprisingly, the use of aggressive humor has been shown to be detrimental to interpersonal relationships (e.g., [Cann, Zapata, & Davis, 2011](#); [Kuiper, Kirsh, & Leite, 2010](#)). Finally, people who have a self-defeating humor style amuse others by belittling themselves. They use humor as a means to avoid confronting problems and dealing with negative feelings.

Over the past several years, empirical research has accumulated showing consistently that specific indices of happiness or subjective well-being correlate positively with affiliative and self-enhancing humor styles, and negatively with aggressive and self-defeating humor styles. [Yue, Hao, and Goldman \(2010\)](#) found that affiliative and self-enhancing humor styles correlated positively with optimism and negatively correlated with psychological distress (e.g., anxiety and depression). In contrast, aggressive and self-defeating humor styles correlated negatively with optimism and positively with psychological distress.

Similarly, [Martin et al. \(2003\)](#) reported that the [Ryff \(1989\)](#) measure of psychological well-being related positively to affiliative and self-enhancing humor styles and negatively to self-defeating humor style. Also, anxiety and depression correlated negatively with affiliative and self-enhancing humor styles but positively with self-defeating humor style. In addition, [Kuiper, Grimshaw, Leite, and Kirsh \(2004\)](#) found that affiliative and self-enhancing humor styles were associated with higher self-esteem, better coping abilities, and judgments of self-competence. Aggressive and self-defeating humor styles, in contrast, were associated with lower self-esteem, greater depression and anxiety, and negative judgments of self-competence.

Recently, [Cann, Stilwell, and Taku \(2012\)](#) further delineated the relationship between humor styles and the general emotion of happiness or subjective well-being. They suggested that the two self-directed humor styles (self-enhancing and self-defeating) are more strongly related to subjective well-being than the other-directed humor styles (affiliative and aggressive). [Cann et al. \(2012\)](#) reported that when measures of subjective well-being were regressed onto all four humor styles simultaneously only self-enhancing and self-defeating humor styles were significantly related to well-being. By viewing the stresses and difficulties of life from a humorous perspective, people with a self-enhancing humor style are able to maintain a positive subjective well-being even in the midst of adversity ([Martin et al., 2003](#); [Kuiper, Martin, & Olinger, 1993](#)). In contrast, those with a self-defeating humor style may be particularly unhappy because others tend to avoid interacting with them, leaving them feeling socially isolated and rejected ([Kuiper & McHale, 2009](#)).

The Present Research

In the present research we examined the relationships between BAS and BIS, humor styles, and happiness. In keeping with previous research, we expected that BAS sensitivity would correlate positively with happiness, whereas BIS sensitivity would correlate negatively with happiness. Similarly, we expected that the beneficial humor styles, particularly self-enhancing humor style, would correlate positively with happiness, and that detrimental humor styles, particularly self-defeating humor style, would correlate negatively with happiness.

In addition, we tested the following new hypotheses. First, because people use self-enhancing and affiliative humor styles to attain positive emotional and interpersonal experiences respectively, we hypothesized that BAS sensitivity correlates positively with self-enhancing and affiliative humor styles. Second, because people use self-defeating humor to avoid the potentially aversive experience of confronting problems, we hypothesized that BIS sensitivity correlates positively with self-defeating humor style. Third, because BAS has been shown to relate to happiness through the active pursuit of positive emotional experiences, we hypothesized that the relationship between BAS sensitivity and happiness is mediated by self-enhancing humor style. That is, approach-oriented people are happier *because* they engage in self-enhancing humor—they maintain a humorous outlook on life, viewing adversity from a humorous perspective.

BIS sensitivity is thought to relate to negative affect, not because BIS-sensitive people engage in specific strategies like self-defeating humor to deal with or avoid dealing with negative emotional events, but because they react more strongly to emotional events (Gable, 2006; Updegraff et al., 2004). Therefore, we did not predict that self-defeating humor style would mediate the hypothesized negative relationship between BIS sensitivity and happiness.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Data were collected via Qualtrics, an online survey tool. A link to the study was distributed to 43 male and 66 female residents of the United States through Mechanical Turk, an on-line participant pool sponsored by Amazon.com. Participants were paid \$0.40 to complete the study. It is noteworthy that Mechanical Turk has been shown to be equally reliable and trustworthy as other sampling methods for collecting survey data (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). Participants ranged in age from 18 to 71 years, with a mean of 37.09 ($SD = 13.99$). The mean age was 34.72 ($SD = 13.79$) for males and 38.64 ($SD = 14.00$) for females. There were 7 African-Americans, 9 Asians, 81 Whites, 8 Hispanics, 3 multi-racial people, and 1 person who indicated their race as “other.”

Upon clicking a link to the study, participants encountered the following instructions: “In this study you will be asked to complete three surveys, the Affective Style Questionnaire, the Humor Style Questionnaire, and the Subjective Happiness Scale. We are interested in determining whether humor styles are related to affective styles.” After providing informed consent, participants first completed Carver and White’s (1994) BIS/BAS questionnaire, followed by Martin et al.’s (2003) Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ) and then Lyubomirsky and Lepper’s (1999) Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS).

Measures

BIS/BAS Questionnaire. Carver and White’s (1994) BIS/BAS questionnaire consists of 20 items designed to assess individual differences in BIS and BAS sensitivity. For all items on the BIS/BAS questionnaire, responses were made on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*not true of me at all*) to 5 (*extremely true of me*). BIS sensitivity is con-

ceptualized as a single dimension consisting of 7 items that address concerns about the possible occurrence of negative events and sensitivity to such events (e.g., "If I think something unpleasant is going to happen I usually get pretty 'worked up.'"). We computed a BIS score for each participant by averaging responses to the seven items. Cronbach's alpha was .83.

BAS sensitivity is comprised of three dimensions: drive, fun seeking and reward responsiveness. The drive scale consists of 4 items that address the pursuit of desired goals (e.g., "When I want something I usually go all-out to get it."). The fun seeking scale consists of 4 items that address the "desire for new rewards and a willingness to approach a potentially rewarding event on the spur of the moment" (Carver & White, 1994, p. 322; e.g., "I'm always willing to try something new if I think it will be fun."). The 5-item reward responsiveness scale focuses on positive responses to a reward (e.g., "When I get something I want, I feel excited and energized.").

According to Gray's (1987) conceptual framework, the three BAS subscales combine to form a unitary measure of BAS sensitivity. Others, however, have suggested that the drive and reward responsiveness scales most clearly reflect the critical concepts of BAS; whereas the fun scale reflects both responsiveness to anticipated rewards (BAS) as well as impulsivity (e.g., Carver & White, 1994; Smillie, Jackson, & Dalgleish, 2006). Thus, before combining items to form an aggregate measure of BAS, we examined the correlations among the BAS subscales and the BIS scale. See Table 1.

Table 1

Correlations among the total BAS scale, the BIS scale, the BAS-drive subscale (BASD), the BAS-fun seeking subscale (BASF) and the BAS-reward responsiveness subscale (BASR).

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. BAS						3.33	0.65
2. BIS	.16					3.43	0.81
3. BASD	.77**	-.11				2.96	0.87
4. BASF	.84**	.13	.47**			3.06	0.83
5. BASR	.81**	.37**	.39**	.59**		3.84	0.70

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

As can be seen in Table 1, all three BAS subscales are highly correlated to the total BAS scale and highly correlated with one another. Also, consistent with previous research (e.g., Smits & Boeck, 2006), the BIS scale and the total BAS scale were unrelated. Finally, the Cronbach's alpha for the total BAS scale was .88; it was .83 without the items comprising the fun-seeking subscale. Based on these analyses, and in accordance with Gray's (1987) conceptual framework, we averaged responses to all 13 items to form a global measure of BAS sensitivity.

Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ). Martin et al.'s (2003) HSQ consists of four 8-item subscales that measure the degree to which people habitually engage in affiliative humor (e.g., "I enjoy making people laugh"), self-enhancing humor (e.g., "Even when I'm by myself, I'm often amused by the absurdities of life"), aggressive humor (e.g., "If I don't like someone, I often use humor or teasing to put them down"), and self-defeating humor (e.g., "I will often get carried away in putting myself down if it makes my family or friends laugh"). Participants indicated their agreement with each item using a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). We averaged responses to the four items of each subscale for each participant. Cronbach's alpha was .88 for affiliative humor, .86 for self-enhancing humor, .73 for aggressive humor, and .83 for self-defeating humor.

Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS). Lyubomirsky and Lepper's (1999) SHS consists of four items measured on 7-point scales designed to determine the extent to which people consider themselves to be happy or unhappy. For the first item participants completed the statement, "I consider myself:" by responding on a scale ranging from 1 (*not a very happy person*) to 7 (*a very happy person*). For the second item they completed the statement, "Compared to most of my peers, I consider myself:" using a scale ranging from 1 (*less happy*) to 7 (*more happy*). The third item consisted of the question, "Some people are generally very happy. They enjoy life regardless of what is going on, getting the most out of everything. To what extent does this characterization describe you?" Participants responded on a scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*a great deal*). Finally, the fourth contained the question, "Some people are generally not very happy. Although they are not depressed, they never seem as happy as they might be. To what extent does this characterization describe you?" Again, participants responded on a scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*a great deal*). After reverse scoring item 4, we computed a SHS score for each participant by averaging responses to the four items. Cronbach's alpha was .89.

Results

Correlations

Table 2 presents correlations among all of the measures along with descriptive statistics.ⁱ Consistent with previous research (Gable, 2006), we found that BAS sensitivity correlated positively with happiness ($r = .21, p < .05$), whereas BIS sensitivity correlated negatively with happiness ($r = -.47, p < .001$). Also consistent with research by Cann et al. (2012), self-enhancing humor style correlated positively with happiness ($r = .39, p < .001$) as did affiliative humor style although not significantly ($r = .13, p = .20$). In addition, self-defeating humor style correlated negatively with happiness ($r = -.26, p < .01$), as did aggressive humor style ($r = -.18, p = .06$).

Table 2

Correlations and descriptive statistics for the BAS, BIS, self-enhancing humor style (SE-H), affiliative humor style (AFF-H), self-defeating humor style (SD-H) and aggressive humor style (AGG-H).

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	M	SD
1. BAS								3.33	0.65
2. BIS	.16							3.43	0.81
3. SE-H	.42**	-.11						4.80	1.06
4. AFF-H	.30**	.05	.58**					5.35	1.10
5. SD-H	.15	.20*	.09	.07				3.71	1.08
6. AGG-H	-.04	-.07	-.06	.05	.43**			3.40	0.93
7. SHS	.21*	-.47**	.39**	.13	-.26**	-.18		4.68	1.38

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Consistent with our first hypothesis, BAS sensitivity correlated positively with self-enhancing humor style ($r = .42, p < .01$) and affiliative humor style ($r = .30, p < .01$). Insofar as people are motivated to seek rewards (high BAS) they tend to engage in humor in daily life in ways that facilitate the attainment of positive emotional experiences (self-enhancing humor) and positive interpersonal experiences (affiliative humor).

The results also support our second hypothesis. BIS sensitivity correlated positively with self-defeating humor style ($r = .20, p < .05$). To the extent that people are motivated to avoid potentially aversive experiences, they

tend to engage in self-defeating humor, which facilitates the avoidance of the negative emotional experience of confronting problems in daily life.

Mediation Analyses

To test our hypothesis that the relationship between BAS and happiness is mediated by self-enhancing humor style, we performed a path analysis following the procedures described by Baron and Kenny (1986; see Figure 1).

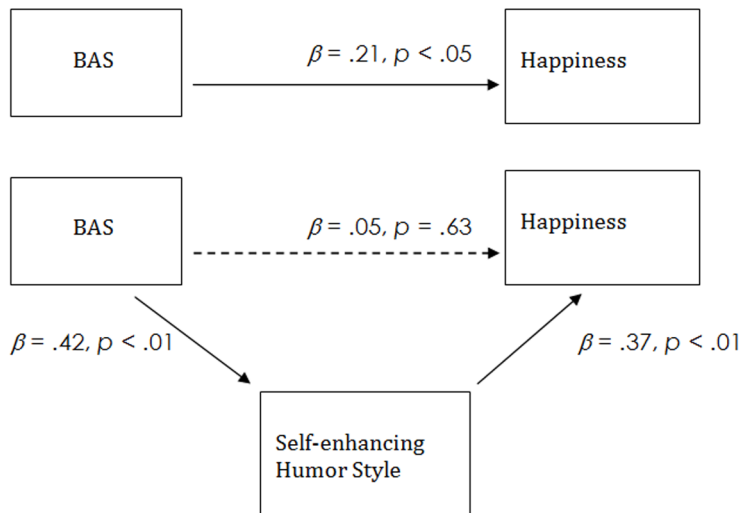


Figure 1. The relation between BAS, self-enhancing humor style and happiness.

We first regressed the criterion variable, happiness, onto the predictor variable, BAS. This direct path was significant ($\beta = .21$, $t = 2.16$, $p < .05$). We then regressed the mediator variable, self-enhancing humor, onto BAS. That path also was significant ($\beta = .42$, $t = 4.78$, $p < .01$). Finally, we regressed happiness onto both BAS and self-enhancing humor. The path from self-enhancing humor to happiness was significant ($\beta = .37$, $t = 3.81$, $p < .01$). However, the direct path from BAS to happiness was no longer significant ($\beta = .05$, $t = 0.49$, $p = .63$). A Sobel test revealed that the decrease in the direct path from BAS to happiness when self-enhancing humor was included in the model (from .21 to .05) was significant, $Z = 3.00$, $p < .01$.

In addition, we tested our hypothesis using bootstrapping procedures described by Preacher and Hayes (2004). The bootstrapping analysis tests whether the indirect effect (i.e., the path from BAS to happiness through self-enhancing humor style) is different from zero by providing a 95% confidence interval for the population value of the indirect effect (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). If zero is not in the 95% confidence interval the indirect effect is significant at $p < .05$.

Using Preacher and Hayes' (2004) bootstrapping macro for SPSS, we computed bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals for 5,000 samples with replacement and found that the indirect effect was significant, as indicated by a confidence interval that did not include zero, 95% CI [.01, .04]. Taken together, our mediation analyses support our hypothesis suggesting that the relationship between BAS and happiness was mediated by self-enhancing humor style. People high in BAS are happier, at least in part, because they engage in self-enhancing humor in their daily lives.

Finally, we conducted the same bootstrapping analysis to test whether the negative relationship between BIS sensitivity and happiness was mediated by self-defeating humor. As expected, the confidence interval did include zero, 95% CI [-.03, .00]. People high in BIS sensitivity reported being less happy but not *because* they use self-defeating humor. This is consistent with research by Gable (2006) and Updegraff et al. (2004) showing that BIS sensitivity relates to negative affect, not because BIS-sensitive people engage in specific strategies to deal with or avoid dealing with negative emotional events, but because they react more strongly to emotional events.

Discussion

The results of our study corroborate the findings of previous research (e.g., Gable, 2006) showing that BAS sensitivity predicted greater happiness, whereas BIS sensitivity predicted less happiness. People are happy insofar as they have an approach-oriented affective style, and unhappy to the extent that they have an avoidance-oriented affective style.

Also consistent with previous research (e.g., Martin et al., 2003) we found that people who engage in more self-enhancing and affiliative humor reported being happier, whereas people who engage in more self-defeating and aggressive humor reported being less happy. Furthermore, consistent with Cann et al. (2012), we found that the two self-directed humor styles (self-enhancing and self-defeating) related more strongly to happiness than did the two other-directed humor styles (affiliative and aggressive).

The present research also demonstrated that approach-oriented and avoidance-oriented people use humor differently in daily life. Approach-oriented people have developed beneficial, adaptive strategies of using humor. Participants higher in BAS reported using self-enhancing and affiliative humor to a greater degree. In contrast, people with an avoidance-oriented affective style appear to have developed a self-detrimental strategy of using humor. Participants higher in BIS reported using self-defeating humor more than those low in BIS.

Finally, the present research contributes to our understanding of the processes that mediate the relationship between affective style and happiness. Previous research has shown that people with an approach-oriented affective style are happy because they seek out positive experiences (Gable, 2006), spend more time attending to positive stimuli (Derryberry & Reed, 1994), and place greater value on positive emotional experiences (Updegraff et al., 2004). Our study identifies a new mechanism by which approach motivation influences happiness. We found that approach-oriented people are happier *because* they engage in the adaptive habit of using self-enhancing humor in their daily lives; they maintain a humorous outlook on life even in the face of stress and adversity. Approach-oriented people engage in goal-directed behavior to attain rewards or positive experiences. Accordingly, perhaps they habitually maintain a humorous outlook on life as a deliberate strategy of regulating positive and negative emotions.

These findings add to a growing body of research on the role that humor styles play in mediating relationships between personality traits and various emotional and interpersonal experiences related to psychological well-being (e.g., Besser, Luyten, & Mayes, 2012; Cann, Norman, Welbourne, & Calhoun, 2008; Dozois, Martin, & Bieling, 2009; Kuiper & McHale, 2009). Kuiper and McHale (2009), for instance, examined the role of humor styles in mediating the relationship between self-schemas and psychological well-being and social self-esteem. They found that self-defeating humor mediates the relationship between endorsement of negative self-evaluative beliefs and low social self-esteem. People who disproportionately focus on their negative attributes engage in self-defeating

humor to a greater degree and as a result experience lower social self-esteem. In addition, endorsement of positive self-evaluative beliefs was associated with greater use of affiliative humor, which in turn predicted higher levels of social self-esteem and lower levels of depression.

Similarly, [Besser et al. \(2012\)](#) found that individuals with high levels of attachment anxiety—people who tend to intensify negative emotional experiences—and those with high levels of attachment avoidance—people who tend to avoid emotional situations—tend to engage in maladaptive humor styles (self-defeating and aggressive) which in turn predicted greater perceived distress in daily life. Taken together, a clear picture is emerging showing that beneficial and detrimental humor styles are important mediators of the relationship between personality characteristics that guide the way people interact with others and the quality of their emotional and interpersonal experiences in social settings ([Cann et al., 2012](#)).

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Although our study makes a new contribution to our understanding of the functions of humor styles in daily life, the scope of our study was limited to their impact on the emotional experience of happiness. Our study thus raises interesting questions for future research. First, approach-oriented people habitually engage in affiliative humor, which itself is associated with greater relationship satisfaction (e.g., [Hall, 2013](#); [Martin et al., 2003](#)). Thus, it is possible that approach-oriented people find greater satisfaction in interpersonal relationships *because* they engage in affiliative humor. Perhaps they engage in affiliative humor as a strategy to enhance the quality of interpersonal relationships.

In addition, self-defeating humor did not mediate the relationship between BIS and happiness in the present study. However, future research could address the possibility that avoidance-oriented people suffer in a variety of ways not addressed by the present research because of their tendency to engage in self-defeating humor. Indeed, self-defeating humor predicts less satisfaction with interpersonal relationships ([Cann et al., 2008](#)), lower self-esteem ([Zeigler-Hill & Besser, 2011](#)), and greater social rejection ([Kuiper, Kirsh, & Leite, 2010](#)).

Conclusion

Our study empirically supports the folk wisdom of Groucho Marx and Jim Butcher illustrated in the opening quotes. Happiness is determined not only by our life circumstances but also by our dispositions or personalities. People tend to be more happy to the extent that they have an approach-oriented affective style and less happy insofar as they have an avoidance affective style. Furthermore, the fortunate approach-oriented people use humor in a positive, self-enhancing way in their daily lives as a strategy to find happiness.

Notes

i) The correlations and mediation analyses were nearly identical when BAS was comprised of only the drive and reward responsiveness subscales.

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Competing Interests

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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